

"Plain Talk!"

Text: Titus 2:1, "But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine."

If I were to begin this morning by stating, "Whereas the pastor, hereinafter to be known as the party of the first part, and the congregation of St. Paul's United Church of Christ, hereinafter to be known as the party of the second part, do hereby covenant together in that the party of the first part will conduct services of worship at the convenience of the party of the second part at a time and place to be designated by the party of the second part in agree^{ask}ment with the party of the first part," I am sure most of you would ~~exclaim~~, "Just what is he trying to say?"

For those of you who are legally minded, you would perhaps recognize ~~this~~ the foregoing jargon as being something that is conveyed on deeds, and wills and other legal documents. For the most part we do not speak in this manner. To do so would perhaps be similar to the man who hurried to hear a certain senator speak at a local rally. He arrived late. ~~He~~ As he was entering the auditorium he met a man who was leaving. He asked him if the senator had spoken yet. The man replied, "He is speaking now, and has been doing so for the last half hour." "What is he talking about?" asked the man. "I don't know," was the reply, "he hasn't said yet."

We make light of the fact that there are times when we hear and read things that we cannot understand. However, it is something that actually happens unfortunately and it is something that is exasperating if you have never encountered it. Theologians are a good example of this at certain times. Let me try to illustrate this. Man has from the beginning of time, tried to show the cause and effect of evil and how it can exist without God being able to control it. An English theologian by the name of M. B. Ahern wrote a book on this subject and he entitled it, (what else?), the Problem of Evil. Here are a few examples of his writing:

"It will be argued that the whole subject of God and evil has been in a confused state, due to failure to separate questions that are different and to keep in clear the precise nature of each question."

We are lead to believe by this sentence that the author will make the

problem clear. He goes on to say:

"It will be shown centrally, there are three distinct kinds of problem about the logical capability of God and evil. It will be maintained that the traditional problem of evil is fundamentally an abstract problem and that it is a problem about evil in general. It will be claimed that besides the traditional problem there are other distinct problems which concern specific evil. Some of these are fundamentally abstract problems which ask ~~if~~ whether the existence of God is compatible with specific evil. The others are concrete problems which ask whether the conditions for compatibility are met in the whole world. The former class of problems will be called the specific abstract problem of evil and the latter class will be called the specific concrete problem of evil. There will then be three kinds of problem about the logical compatibility of God and evil designated. It will be argued that it is essential to distinguish the general problem of evil from the ~~abstract~~ specific problem and that it is essential to distinguish the abstract problems, whether general or specific, from the concrete problems."

"This study is concerned with both the specific and general problems."

Now this may seem simple enough for the author and no doubt he knows exactly what he is trying to say. To make sure the reader understands all of this he quotes a source dating back to 342 BC, written by a man named Epicurus.

"God either wishes to take away evils, and is unable; or he is able, and is unwilling; or he is neither willing nor able; or he is both willing and able. If he is willing and ~~unable~~ unable, he is feeble, which is not in accordance with the character of God; if he is able and unwilling, he is malicious which is equally at variance with God; if he is neither willing nor able; he is both malicious and feeble and therefore not God; if he is both willing and able, which is alone suitable to God, from what source are evils or why does he not remove them?"

Well, I think that perhaps from all of this you have an idea of the point I am trying to make. And if you understand what he is talking about on either an abstract, specific, or concrete plane about the problem of evil, the specific abstract problem of evil, or the specific concrete abstract problem of evil, I sure wish you would tell me.

Maybe the old conservative radio preacher had the best answer available about the problem ~~ix~~ of evil in the world. He told the story of God's creation and of man's disobedience to God and the result of sin and evil coming into the world. He wanted to prove to point to his audience beyond a shadow of a doubt, but he had to get Satan here on earth before the fall of Adam and Eve or his whole argument was lost. He shouted into the microphone

at his unseen audience;

"My Christian friends, do you know when Satab came upon earth? Do you know when evil came down to tempt man and to lead him away from God? No? Well, I'm going to tell you!

Satan was kicked out of heaven by God who got tired of his nagging and he came down to ~~tempt~~ earth to tempt man. And I want you to understand friends, that this happened between the second and third chapters of the book of Genesis."

But you see this is a copout and doesn't answer the question at all. It is merely another form of doubletalk and this is what Paul was admonishing Titus against doing. Paul was telling him to talk plainly, to give the facts and the details that are sound and true and basic. He was seeking to have Titus share with these people on Crete the truth plain and simple. Paul writes in the very first verse: "But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine."

Paul's main purpose for writing to Titus in this second chapter was to share with him the work of a true ~~pastor~~ minister and pastor. Titus in turn was to use this knowledge in dealing with his little flock and to help them by instruction, by sharing with them, and by setting an example with his own life.

In the 2nd vs he points out that Titus is to instruct the older men of the church ~~xxxxxxx~~ in the virtues that are admired and respected by all. These instructions were not to the elders of the church but to the Senior Citizen men. The instructions to the women are the same in vs 3. With age should come wisdom, dignity and experience. Therefore an older man or woman can show by life and example how to live.

In vs 4 what the older people can teach the younger is brought out. The young women are to be temperate, to show love for husband and family, to mind their own business, not be gossipers, to be clean and neat, to be obedient to their husbands. This does not mean that they are to be told what to do all the time, but to work at the job of being a wife, and the husband is to work at being a husband. In this manner the Word of God will not be scandalized by improper living and those outside the church would see what it is and means

to be a Christian.

Vs 6 young men are advised to be sober-minded. To tend to business and be a proper member of society. Then Paul adds some more advice that Titus is to follow in his own life. In vs 9 the servants are advised in how to live and act. They are to be obedient and not to talk back. They are told not to steal from their employers which is what many of them were doing. They were to be truthful and faithful in the manner of Jesus Christ.

Then the message of what God has done in the world is once again brought out by Paul to show the very reason for living life in a new and different way. And Paul closes the chapter of this letter by advising Titus, "These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee." He is telling him to speak plainly and to urge his people to live in this manner, but also to live a life of love, so no man can hate him.

Thus we have a message that we can share today as well. It is a message of "Plain Talk," and simple speech. It is the message of God's love for the world as evidenced in the life, ministry and death of Jesus Christ. In many areas of society we are hearing much, but understanding little. In the religious community many voices are raised in telling us many things in multisyllabled words and phrases, which few if any can understand. Instead we should be hearing things we can readily understand. A good example of this is the story a minister told about being in a dining room at lunch time. Before he could finish his meal and leave a man got up and announced that another man was going to make a speech. He introduced the Chief of the Fire Department, while all the while the minister was hoping he could get up to leave. But since he had paid for his lunch, he was determined to eat it, and leave as best he could. The Fire Chief started off by stating, "I aint no sneaker." But as he started into his speech he pointed out things most people in that room never thought of. He told how most folks never knew the number of the fire department and so had to look it up if needed. He told that many people would light a match to see how much gas was in the gas tank or can.

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
BUTLER, PENNSYLVANIA
FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST SEPTEMBER 15, 1974
REV. RALPH C. LINK, PASTOR
MRS. MARILYN STEPHENSON, ORGANIST
MR. RALPH COOPER, CHOIR DIRECTOR
PAM FRY, MARY DELLEN - ACOLYTES

ORDER OF WORSHIP 11:00 A.M.

PRELUDE: AT AN OLD TRYSTING PLACE - - - MAGGOWELL
GALILEE - - - - - CLARKE

SILENT PRAYER

*PROCESSIONAL HYMN No. 21

*ASCRPTION - CHORAL AMEN

*EXHORTATION

*CONFESSION (IN UNISON) "O CHRIST WHO HAS CALLED US
IN LOVE TO BE ONE WITH EACH OTHER AND WITH GOD,
FORGIVE US WHEN WE HAVE NOT BEEN TRUE TO YOUR CALL;
WHEN OUR FAMILIES HAVE NOT BEEN ONE IN CHRIST DIRECTING
US TO CHRISTIAN GROWTH THROUGH A CHURCH UNITED IN YOUR
NAME; WHEN WE HAVE NOT ATTEMPTED TO LEARN YOUR WILL FOR
US; WHEN WE HAVE FAILED TO UNDERSTAND OUR COMMUNITY
AND ITS NEEDS FOR HEALTHY GROWTH. BE MERCIFUL AND
UNDERSTANDING, GRANTING US FORGIVENESS AND THE WILL
AND DESIRE TO GROW IN CHRISTIAN UNITY. AMEN."

*KYRIE (CHOIR, CONGREGATION AND PASTOR)

*ASSURANCE OF PARDON - CHORAL AMEN

*PRAISE

*PASTOR: O LORD OPEN OUR LIPS.

*PEOPLE: AND OUR MOUTH SHALL SHOW FORTH THY PRAISE

*DOXOLOGY No. 551

SCRIPTURE LESSON: TITUS 11

HYMN No. 229

*AFFIRMATION OF OUR FAITH (APOSTLES' CREED)

*GLORIA PATRI

*CALL TO PRAYER

*PASTOR: THE LORD BE WITH YOU.

*PEOPLE: AND WITH THY SPIRIT.

*PASTOR: LET US PRAY.

*PRAYER AND PRAYER RESPONSE

*OFFERING

ACOLYTE PIN CHRIS CAMPBELL

OFFERTORY: REVERIE - - - - - DEBUSSY
ANTHEM: PEACE BE STILL - - - - - BY PALMER
SERMON: PLAIN TALK
PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER
*HYMN OF DEDICATION No. 15
*BENEDICTION AND THREE FOLD AMEN
ORGAN POSTLUDE: MARCHE - - - - - LACHNER

*CONGREGATION STANDING - - - - -
THE LOVELY FLOWERS ON THE ALTAR HAVE BEEN PLACED BY
MR. AND MRS. CHARLES FLEEGER
SERVING AS USHERS TODAY ARE: *PAUL RIEMER, DARLY TAIT
JOHN DREHER, GARY PENAR, AND DON KINGSLEY.
DEACON AND MRS. ROBERT KNAUER WILL REPRESENT COUNCIL
AT THE DOOR TODAY.
NURSERY WILL BE PROVIDED TODAY BY MRS. MARGARET COVERT
AND PAULA STEPHENSON.

THE ATTENDANCE LAST SUNDAY WAS 209.

TONIGHT - 7:00 - YOUTH FELLOWSHIP - 7TH GRADE AND UP.

ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING - ELECTION OF OFFICERS.

MONDAY - 6:00 - FIDELITY BIBLE CLASS TUREEN DINNER.

WED. - 6:00 - GOLDEN CIRCLE - SALAD SMORGASBORD.

BRING A SALAD AND YOUR TABLE SERVICE - DESSERT

AND BEVERAGE WILL BE PROVIDED. ANOTHER FEATURE

OF THE EVENING WILL BE A FARMER'S MARKET, SO

BRING BAKED GOODS, JELLY, CANDY, ETC.

THURS. - 10:00 - MARY MARTHA CIRCLE MEETING - ITEMS

FOR THE BAZAAR AT THE SOUP'N SALAD SUPPER WILL BE

MADE. BRING A SANDWICH AND DESSERT AND BEVERAGE

WILL BE PROVIDED.

SEPT. 22 - NEXT SUNDAY - CONGREGATIONAL DINNER -

SENIOR CHRISTIANS WILL BE HONORED AND THEY ARE

EXPECTED TO BRING NOTHING. OTHERS ARE TO BRING

GENEROUS TUREENS - 5:30. CHET STAUFFER WILL BE M.

HOSPITALIZED: CATHY SHEPPECK ROOM 418

MONDAY - SEPT. 16 - 7:30 - SPIRITUAL COUNCIL WILL

HAVE A MEETING.

RICHARD WULFE 456

WELCOME VISITORS

OCT 27, 7:00 P.M. SERVICE FOR SHUT-IN'S COMM.

2nd vs, P point out T 2 instruct older men of church in virtues admired respected by all
These instructs not elders church, but Senior citizen

I ructs 2 women same vs.3
With age come wisdom/dignity/experience
there4 older man/woman show by life/examp how liv

vs 4 what older peop can teach younger

Yg womwn be temp, show love 4 hus & fam,
mind own bus, no gossip, be clean/neat,
obedient hus.

Not mean be told what do all time, but be wife
& hus work at be hus.

In this manner Word of God not scandalized by
improper liv & those outside church see what is
& means be Xpian.

vs 6, yg men advised be sober minded,
tend bus, be proper member society.

Then P adds some advice T 2 follow own life

In vs 9, servants told how live/act
2 be obed, no talk back,
no steal as many did from employer,
they 2 be truthful/faithful in manner Js. Xp.

Then message what God did in world again brot out
by P. to show reason for liv life in new diff way

P. close chap by advise T.,
"These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all
aority. Let no man despise thee."

He tell speak plainly, urge peop live this manner,
but also liv life of love, so no man hate U

Thus have message 4 2day as well.

It message "Plain Talk," & simple speech
It messahe God's love as evidenced in life/min/detk
Js. Xp.

Many areas society hear much/understand little
In rel. comm, many voice raise tell many thing in
multi-syllabled words/phrases, few if any understand

Insted should be hear things readily understood.

Good examp minister at lunch
(Illustration fireman making speech) #5

What make fireman speech so wonderful?

me from heart

It just "PLAIN TALK"

Not fancy adjectives/flowery phrases,
but basics he knew bout job & he put heart/soul
in it

"Plain Talk!"

Te : Titus 2:1, "Speak thou the things which become
sound doctrine." #1

If I began this morn by saying, (read whereas etc.)
Most U would ask, "What he try say?"

Those who legal mind recognize #going jargon as
something conveyed, deeds/wills, legal documents

4 most part, no speak this manner.

2 do so be like man want here senator speak
(Illustration senator speak)

We make lite fact times we hear/read things no under
stand

However, it actual happen unfortunately, & this
exasperating if U ever encountered it.

Theolog's good exam this at times

Let me illustrate:

Man from start time tried show cause/effect evil,
& how it can exist without God be able control it.

Eng. theo. by name M.B. Ahern wrote book,
called, (What else?) The Problem Of Evil.

Here exmps his writing: #3
(Illustrate this)

I think perhaps all U have idea point I make,
If U understand what he talk about on either an
abstract, specific, or concrete plane about problem
evil,

the specific abstract problem of evil, or the
specific concrete abstract problem of evil,

I sure wish U tell me.

Maybe old conserv preach had best answer bout evil
(Illustration this radio preacher) #4

But this only copout, & doesn't answer quest either
Merely nother form doub/talk.

This P. admonish Titus about

He tell T. talk plainly, give facts & details
that sound/true/basic

He seek have T share with peop. Crete truth plain
& simple.

P. write 1st vs, (read text)

P's main purp 2nd chap share with T, work of true
minister & pastor.

T in turn 2 use knowl in deal little flock &
help by instruct, by share, by set examp own life

This what P. had mind 65 AD when wrote T. 3/

Timeless words, just true 2day as were 1900 yr ago

Words that should speak 2day to young & old/married
& single/children/grandchildren,

"PLAIN TALK" that Js. Xp. is the same yesterday,
today, and forever."

Let us always remem 2, "Speak thou the things which
become sound doctrine."

Shirley & Ralph Charles Link, Nancy Link, Dale with Lianne his wife, Lloyd Link with Karen his wife
 Jessica in front of Ralph C. Link
 Ethan and Alisha in front of R. Dale and Lianne Link (the eldest son & family)









Ralph C. Link
153 Keck Road
Sarver, Pa. 16055
(412) 352-1103

Born: April 9, 1929, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Married: December 15, 1951
Wife: Shirley Margaret Neill
Born: December 8, 1930, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Children: Ralph Dale Link, born May 11, 1955, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Lloyd Alan Link, born May 28, 1958, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Nancy Lynn Link, born March 15, 1961, Butler, Pa.

SCHOOLING:

Graduated from Perry High School, Pittsburgh, Pa.
June 1947

Lay Ministry School, Penn West Conference of United
Church of Christ, September 1965 to May 1969

Commissioned Lay Minister June 1969

Lancaster Theological Seminary, Lancaster, Pa.,
September 1970

Graduated from Lancaster Theological Seminary May 1974

Ordained to Christian Ministry March 10, 1974

PASTORATES:

As Lay Minister: short term, 1 month or less in
various churches 1965 to 1967

Emlenton Lamartine Charge of United Church of Christ
1967 to 1969

Short term in various churches 1970 until Seminary
entrance July 1970

July 1970 to December 1973 Student Pastor at Trinity
Charge, New Bloomfield, Duncannon, Pa., Penn Central
Conference, United Church of Christ

December 1973 to present, St. Paul's United Church of
Christ, Butler, Pa., Penn West Conference, United
Church of Christ

PERSONAL TESTIMONY

OF

Ralph C. Link

I am the youngest of five children. I was born just prior to the onset of the Depression. Our family was very poor. My father was an alcoholic and my mother was a very religious person who was searching for the Lord. During my childhood she did her best to teach me the things of the Lord. Later in life she came to a personal relationship with Him.

I grew up in the Evangelical and Reformed Church where salvation by grace alone was not preached nor taught. I knew all about Jesus, what He did, how He lived, His miracles, His death and resurrection, but I didn't know Him personally.

My life had many ups and downs and all the while I was attending church and striving with my good works to please God. At a very low point in my life when we were deeply in debt and my wife and three children were all ill, I came to the crossroads. I watched a Billy Graham Crusade on television from some distant city and the message he preached seemed to be directed right at me. I wrestled with making that commitment to Christ, but didn't. The next afternoon and evening at work on the 4 to 12 shift I came to the conclusion that I needed to make that commitment to Christ. It seemed like there was no other choice if life was to have any meaning. That night when I came home from work at 1:00 A.M., I laid face down on the living room floor and told God that I couldn't live my life in my own strength and I accepted the gift of salvation from my Savior Jesus Christ. My life has never been the same.

Through several meaningful circumstances I was called by God to serve Him in the Christian Ministry and to help spread that wonderful message of salvation through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. What a wonderful and rewarding time it has been and I give Him all the praise for my salvation and the opportunity to serve Him.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

OF

Ralph C. Link

I believe the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired inerrant Word of God. I believe the Bible is the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men and it is the final authority for the Christian faith and life.

I believe in one God, who is eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

I believe in the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ that He is true God and true man. I believe that He was born of the Virgin Mary, that He lived in sinless life, that He performed the miracles recorded in Scripture, that He died on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins, that He bodily arose from the dead, that He ascended on high where He is at the right hand of Almighty God as our intercessor.

I believe in the Holy Spirit and that He comes and indwells each believer at the time of conversion. I believe that He lives in each believer to lead, to instruct, and to convict so that a believer may live a more godly life.

I believe that through the shed blood of Jesus Christ and through His resurrection, this is the only ground for justification and salvation for all who receive Him. A Lord and Savior and to such as receive Him, they are born of the Holy Spirit and become children of God.

I believe water baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of the Church but are not means of salvation.

I believe in the personal and premillennial and imminent coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I believe in the resurrection of the dead, for the believer to resurrection of life and joy with the Lord, for the unbeliever to resurrection of judgement and everlasting punishment.